

DOT ready to spend stimulus dollars

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The Iowa Department of Transportation has identified 125 state highway and bridge repair projects, and another 190 local ones that could be done with federal stimulus money.

Those projects would cost more than the 360-million federal stimulus dollars coming to Iowa, so D-O-T director Nancy Richardson says the transportation commission will compile a final list of projects at its meeting next week.

"The commission will have before them action items pertaining to highway funding, trails funding and transit funding. So they will be making a lot of the decisions about which projects will be moving forward," Richardson says. She says they had to get a list of projects ready, that's why there are more projects than money.

Richardson says: "Because it takes awhile to prepare transportation projects, you just couldn't just lay in the weeds and see how the bill got passed. You had to be out proactive preparing projects, so we prepared knowingly, we prepared a little larger so we were sure we had enough projects in the cue to capture every penny that came to Iowa and wouldn't turn any of it back."

Richardson says 19 contracts for bridge repair and highway resurfacing worth nearly \$57-million have already been put out to bid. Iowa will receive another \$36-million for mass transit systems.